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ABSTRACT

This guide to coping with problems arising from the psychology and needs of disadvantaged youth examines the characteristics of the disadvantaged youth and especially his family background; the role of the counselor, including establishing rapport with the disadvantaged youth and testing and counseling him; educational and vocational counseling; means of motivating the disadvantaged youth; identification of the able disadvantaged youth; the extension of guidance services through community resources; some comments made by counselors during interviews with the authors; and the impact of the disadvantaged youth upon the counselor. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (EM)

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COUNSELING
THE
DISADVANTAGED STUDENT

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Preface

Counseling the Disadvantaged Student is a book that had to be written. The 1960's have brought growing concern about personal counseling, career guidance, and the special needs of disadvantaged persons.

As American society becomes more open, opportunities and expectations simultaneously rise. Thus, the removal of old and artificial barriers to individual progress and fulfillment does not automatically reduce frustration and failure. In fact, these forms of human waste and unhappiness may actually be multiplied unless education and its chief bottleneck, the counseling process, are improved.

The struggle is under way to eliminate wide discrepancies in the levels of quality in America's schools. New and relevant programs of education and training are being introduced. A national commitment has been made to aid the economically and culturally deprived individual -- whether he be an urban ghetto dweller or the inhabitant of a rural poverty pocket -- and to help him to be a contributing, resourceful member of his community.

Without improved counseling, however, the desired increments in personal success, self-esteem, and manpower development will be too meager to matter. The prospects are grim for a dramatic and massive improvement. For one thing, there is a severe shortage of well-trained, professionally qualified counselors. Further, the special problems of the disadvantaged are not well enough understood by those who must work with them and who must first understand, then respect these individuals for what they are and what they are capable of becoming and capable of doing.

The authors of Counseling the Disadvantaged Student have gone beyond the familiar stage of analyzing and bemoaning a difficult problem. In clear, down-to-earth language they have revealed the minds and personalities of disadvantaged youngsters.

This is a book full of light and hope. It is insightfully written and incorporates the collective wisdom of many counselors of the disadvantaged. It offers no gimmicks but provides sound general advice on how to cope with problems arising from the special psychology and needs of the disadvantaged youth, be he white or Negro.

It is my sincere hope that this useful volume will find its way into the hands of students, counselors, school teachers, administrators, college professors who prepare counselors and teachers, and personnel of all agencies concerned with the disadvantaged. We in education realize we have a long way to go if vast new areas of opportunity are to be utilized. I commend the authors for having created a readable guide that fills a void.

Felix C. Robb
Director
Southern Association of
Colleges and Schools
March 25, 1968

CHAPTER I

The Disadvantaged Student

For several hours every school day, counselors meet and work with individuals and groups of disadvantaged boys and girls. A wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, aptitudes, interests, and capabilities are encountered. The kinds of jobs they expect to get, the things they expect to do, and the means they intend to use to reach these ends are as different as the number of boys and girls in the school. The ways in which they see people, objects, and events and the ways in which they act differ from one child to another. If guidance of disadvantaged youth is to be tailored for each separate student, if counseling is to be effective in its concern for the disadvantaged youth in assisting them to develop interests and abilities to set goals and places, to meet personal and social problems, and to adjust to the here and now situations, complete acceptance and understanding of the disadvantaged youth and his different characteristics must be gained.

It is impossible to draw a composite picture of the disadvantaged boy or girl. Just as each middle-class student is an individual .

with his own unique characteristics and manner of acting, so is each disadvantaged child unique. Each is a person, an individual. Some are tall; some are short. Some are white; others are black. Still others are brown, red, or yellow. There are bright ones, dull ones, shy ones, and aggressive ones. But the common properties they share are the poverty from which they come and the different cultures and societies which they reflect in the counseling situation.

Lee Ying is a small, attractive boy. He is obedient, almost to the point of being afraid to do anything wrong. In the counseling session, he is rigid and becomes embarrassed when praised or complimented. The interview is a difficult task. Lee is not a "talker"; he just sits, listens, and occasionally smiles. If he talks with the counselor, it is only after many interviews. The counselor finds that directly working with his parents is similarly difficult. Chinese families feel that the "saving face" act is important, and, in most cases, a go-between person becomes involved in meetings between the parents and the counselors.

The Yohoshina adolescent comes from a strict household that places heavy demands on him. His father is the authority and makes the important decisions. Mrs. Yohoshina performs her motherly and wifely duties and makes her contributions to the home and family life, but she is a subordinate personality. Family pride, national tradition, racial feelings, and religion are elements that play an important part in the upbringing of the children.

In contrast is Charlie Williams, a dark-skinned, thin, sullen, fourteen-year old. He does not have a father living with his mother and sisters and brothers. There are, however, "uncles" and "cousins" who frequently visit his ghetto apartment. Mrs. Williams is the head of the house and family and receives public assistance. She makes all the decisions and supports the family.

Charlie, and others like him, assume adult responsibilities at an early age. "Getting what is yours now" is stressed. The long-term values of education, when balanced against the hours of study and the self-denials necessary for high school achievement are judged as having little immediate value on the ghetto streets. School, police, and community institutions are viewed as threatening authorities rather than as agencies which support and protect.

The counselor encounters a youngster who may not talk with him or does so in as few words as possible and who treats the counselor in a distrustful manner. There is a fear of being hurt and a keenness to words and actions that is sometimes hard with which to cope. Problems in understanding his language are not unusual. Slang, jive-talk, a "cool" vocabulary, even a style of dancing are peculiarly their own. Looking forward to low-level jobs, feeling sidetracked from the American mainstream, and being quick to attack, reflect the feelings he has about himself and his place in the world. He meets counselors, teachers, and other adults with wariness, hostility, or open aggression. He is cautious in his dealings with adults and has a social sensitivity that is hard for adults to understand. Problems in understanding his language are not unusual.

Still different is Billy Heckett, a thin, blue-eyed boy, whose family moved to the city from Hillsville. His family ties are close and although he and his family live in a city of 750, 000 people, they follow a rural pattern of living. His parents have little formal education and do not encourage schooling for their children. They are unfriendly, suspicious, and extremely dependent with few apparent desires. Billy does not respond, has a poor attendance record, and presents difficulties in his talks with the counselor.

Billy's counterpart is Jim, a hazel-eyed youngster whose family has lived in Inner City for two generations. His sister finished high school but she was not interested in college. She wanted a job. Jim has no plans for his future; he seems resigned to his lot.

He takes a "wait and see" attitude and, if all else fails, he plans to enter the armed services. Just as the Negro feels that he is unable to reach a place and work and live in the "white world", so does the poor native-born white feel a worthlessness in a white world in which he has nothing and is nobody.

Carmen Chevez is an attractive teenager who shows the effects of poor diet and a lack of vitamins. Her family and social life are characterized by the dominance of the male; her father is the dominate figure in the six-person family. Family ties are strong and her immediate family, plus four relatives, live crowded together in one household. Privacy is a luxury. Carmen speaks two languages, Spanish at home and poor English in school. She is keenly aware of her accent and tends to be withdrawn and silent in classes. Playing hooky from school is a frequent act.

Carmen leads a narrow social life. Her friends speak Spanish and English and virtually have no personal freedom. School social affairs are not attended because her mother or aunt must accompany her. There is a strong feeling against dating young men of different ethnic groups. Going to college is not even considered; she probably will not finish high school. The jobs for which she is prepared are those which require little or no training. She will probably go to work in a garment factory or get married. The counseling interview is one to which Carmen, and her Spanish-American friends, react in a withdrawn, but polite manner. Responses to the counselor are few and she is difficult to draw into an easy-going conversation.

Helen and Bob are blue-eyed and blonde. Their parents are high school dropouts, but are anxious for their son and daughter to graduate from high school. Church attendance is encouraged and both parents are concerned about Helen's boyfriends and Bob's chums. The father works as a dishwasher from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., while the mother is a counter girl in a diner from 5:00 p.m. to midnight. Bob will drop out from the tenth grade. Helen will graduate in June next spring, but will take a part-time job as a waitress. Both children show the effects of a poorly balanced diet with an abundance of starches and "filler foods." They have hopes for the future - graduation from high school, a "good" job, maybe, with a lot of luck, a training program. But underlying it all is the unspoken belief that he does not control his own fate.

Just as the world in which one grows up shapes the mind, molds the character, casts ideals, types notions of the worth of work, family, children, and friends, and fashions the image one holds of himself, so does the world of the disadvantaged child pattern him. His world is one of the unstable home, the broken home, the overcrowded home, the home in which the parents have deserted. The parents who just do not care, the fighting parents, the wandering mother, and the occasional father are all part of the world in which they live.

The lack of education and the absence of skills generally make finding and keeping a job that is not low-level next to impossible. Life becomes a struggle for basic existence. Too often parents are barely literate, are on public assistance, or are unemployed. The feelings of despair, the daily pressure of trying to feed one's self and children causes many parents to seek ways to escape. The buildings and streets of the ghetto, the constant poverty on all sides, the way of life itself, and the feelings and actions of people who live beyond the ghetto bring about feelings of defeat and worthlessness. These things affect the child. Take the case of Phil. Phil was a tenth-grader. Although he misses a great number of days from school, in the class room he generally tries to do and say what is expected of him.

However, about every two or three months, Phil becomes unruly, fights other students, and disrupts class. Several home visits and talks with Mrs. James disclosed that Mrs. James is unmarried and works only now and then. She lives on her son's earnings and her "visitors'" generosity. All the utility bills are in Phil's name and he manages to pay most of them. On any morning, he is apt to awaken to see a strange male in the home. It is no small wonder that he lashes out at the adult world.

After experiences like this, perhaps, it is understandable how some disadvantaged youth, particularly minority group youngsters, mistrust and are suspicious of other people. Many view the world and people, other than themselves, as the "enemy". Being pushed out, being put upon, being made aware of the differences between themselves and others combine to provoke unfriendly, hostile feelings toward others. Some are quiet, withdrawn, and observe from afar; others are overly sensitive and quick to anger and to act.

But not all disadvantaged youth put their feelings into action. Sarah is a fourteen-year old Negro girl who sits and stares at the counselor. Few questions does she answer and when she does, replies with a "un-huh" or "hmmm". She appears stupid. Sarah is not stupid. Instead, the mask of stupidity or ignorance is worn to stop any talk with the counselor who appears "different". He is the "enemy". Not only is there a fear and distrust of people of different races, but also of people of different social classes. They have not had the chance to recognize and handle their own feelings toward persons of a different race or class.

Many of these disadvantaged young people reflect not only the effects of poverty, where they live and how they live, but also the effects of discrimination and segregation. These feelings sometimes are heightened when the counselor is not aware of how the color of one's skin affects his daily life. The damaging effects are many - feelings of dislike, distrust, experiencing embarrassment and humiliation, and doubting or hating one's self. Disadvantaged youth appear to be less able to control themselves than do youth who are not disadvantaged. However, they seem to be more sensitive and alert in dealing with other human beings.

Understanding by the counselor must come with full recognition of the differences in background, experience, and way of life among his counselees. The son or daughter of the white collar worker comes from a home and community in which parents are protective, concerned with education and vocational preparation, and the social ways of acting. Social success is held in high esteem and it is encouraged by a wide range of social experiences. Marriage is delayed. The value of work is praised and the results are seen. Intelligent citizenship is expected. Family life has a legal and religious basis and pre-marital love affairs are frowned upon. Parents visit the school, talk with teachers, and show a genuine concern for achievement. They join the PTA and taken an active interest in the progress and achievements of their child. Friendliness and talkativeness are favorable. The child shows a self-confidence that comes from tender, loving care. There are dreams of the future and a belief that he is the master of his fate. In striking contrast is the world of his disadvantaged counterpart.

In contrast, the young boy or girl of disadvantaged parents comes to school from a home and neighborhood in which high development of social skills is not necessary. Marriage comes early and ends the adolescent social life early. There is a great deal of social life in the form of groups and clubs. Preparation for vocational life is not taken seriously. Lifework is simple--make a living, nothing more. Gaining economic independence is easy, get a job. School does little but develop "readers and writers". The feeling for civic participation is slight and little obligation is felt. Little responsibility to the community is held. In many cases, the family and close relatives and a few neighbors comprise the social unit to which loyalty is attached.

Nevertheless, there is a fierce family loyalty and assistance to the child when he is in difficulty with authority. The birth rate is high and large families are not unusual. There are values and background, but they are dissimilar to the values and background of those who swim in the American mainstream. All too often, these young people feel brushed aside and ignored by the world--the social world, educational world, and even the parental circle. Community institutions become threatening, questioning, and suspicious agencies. It is no small wonder that to own a car or to wear "cool" clothes is an accomplishment. Such are the symbols of success. He has made it. He has survived and won.

But all is not lost; there are good traits possessed by these youth. The ways in which disadvantaged youth deal with the difficult situations and conditions of life reflect a kind of imagination born of necessity. They dislike where they are and how they live. They want to shed themselves of the effects of the color of skin or bilingual characteristics. They want jobs and better homes. These young people hunger for a better life, new ways of acting, of doing things, and the approval that results. Honest concern and affection are recognized and accepted. They can be moved to try. Desire to be someone, to do something can be developed; they can become friendly, open, and trusting. They can work hard and well at a task. They can develop close and deep loyalties. These things are possible if the counselor is willing and acceptable to patience, deep concern, and understanding. These are characteristics not unlike those shown by all young people, but with the disadvantaged much more patience, a far greater concern, and depth of understanding are needed.

CHAPTER II

The Role of the Counselor

Jamie stomped noisily into the counselor's office. He was a small, wiry, shabbily dressed thirteen-year old with a warlike air. "Well, I'm here", he said, "go 'head and pick on me. My teacher sent me."

Ethel Mae timidly stepped into the office. Her large eyes darted from one object in the room to another but never did she look at the counselor. Finally, looking at the floor, she tearfully whispered, "I need help."

These incidents describe just two of the kinds of students with whom the counselor works during the school day. These two descriptions also suggest just two of the dimensions of the roles which the counselor must play in his daily work.

The counselor should not consider himself as all things to all people, but there are definite personalities he is viewed as being by disadvantaged school youth. His role is one of multiple dimensions.

He is viewed in different roles by different students. To some he is a confidant, a respecter of information of family secrets. To others, he is an uncle, a mother, even a father. To all, he should be an acceptable model of the adult world - honest, fair, and understanding. To the frightened, the timid - he is security. To the aggressive and belligerent - he is the understanding and fair. To those in trouble - he is a source of help. To the fatherless boy or girl - he is a father who will listen and solve the problem. To the youth of indifferent or uncaring parents - he is the uncle who will share a concern or discuss a problem. Still to others, he is a mediator between the teacher and the student. To many, he is the one who helps bring about understanding of purpose of home, family, school, teachers, and self, and helps the student realize a productive school life. He is an adult who is just plain himself. One counselor described this role by saying: "In working with disadvantaged students, the counselor's role goes beyond the traditional role--whatever the demands are, I try to meet them."

Other counselors feel that the counselor's role "has to be more aggressive and more directive", and that the counselor "must be concerned with the whole child and his environment."

Using a method or procedure that is compatible with the personality of the counselor will make for the kind of counselor-student relationship that is necessary for effective counseling. If he is a jolly, "hail fellow, well met" type, then this is what he should be. If he is a reserved but pleasant individual, he should not cast himself as a "salesman" type. The world of disadvantaged youth does not love a phony. The disadvantaged student can detect an individual "playing" a role as readily as though the fact were being advertised in bold type. When the facade is detected and proven, the damage to the counselor-student relationship may be beyond repair. Being youself, being sincere and honest is the hallmark of a mature individual; this the counselor must be. Exceptional ability he may not possess, but concern for and faith in the worth, capacity, and potential of the student are essential characteristics.

A second major dimension of the counselor role is one related to teachers with whom he works. The counselor is in a situation in which there are not only students with whom he works, but where there are teachers, other staff members, and administrators. He is a member of a team. He feeds back information to the teachers; he confers with the teacher to recommend those things that can be carried out in the classroom. He discusses certain matters with the administrator. He does not function in a vacuum; he works with others.

The multiple nature and relationship of this role to other school staff have been described in this way: "The counselor must be a learning specialist, a vocational specialist, a social worker and community relations specialist, a staff developer or trainer who works with teachers in improving understanding and in motivating students. . . an administrative leader who serves as an instrument of change and a student experimenter who participates in the student's environment."

A third major dimension of the counselor's role is one in which he deals with individual parents of his students. In this area, he finds himself in face-to-face conversations with parents. He must interpret, describe, explain and develop, in many cases, the same kinds of understandings, support, identification, and concern in parents that are developed in their children. One elementary school counselor in a Higher Horizons program put it this way: "I work more with the individual student, more closely with teachers, and with parents individually at school . . . We have to send for our parents to tell them about the needs of their children. . . We often have difficulty getting them to keep their appointments at school. However, once we get them in, they are usually easy to work with."

Other counselors sensed a difference which was described in the following manner: "This is quite a contrast to my role in a middle-class school where I worked with parents who demanded more of my time both in small workshops and in large group meetings. Instead of truancy problems, I had many school phobia problems."

But, all is not sweetness and light. The role of the counselor sometimes is affected by the realities of the school situation. Many of these realities are not within the precepts of the counselor. Rather they exist because of the expectations and perceptions of teachers, administrators, and community. The counselor is not a human computer. He is not a miracle worker nor a mystical conjurer of instant adjustment. He has not only his own aims and procedures; he has an entire school of experts and a host of predetermined directions in which it is felt that the student should move. It is not easy to understand such an assault. But stand firm the counselor must.

The dimensions of the counselor role are frequently carried out by counselors in school situations that are far from identical. Many schools, whose total enrollment may be considered "disadvantaged", meet the needs of these students and fulfill the counselor role(s) within the organization of a special program. Still in other schools, projects are underway that have been designed to offer compensatory educational and cultural advantages to these students. Yet, in still other schools, special programs and demonstration programs are not initiated. However, even in the absence of the structured organization successful portrayal of the counselor's role is being performed. But the organized program, the demonstration project is a reality of the school situation and it does have its impact upon the counselor. The role of the counselor in these organized programs is influenced by the focus of the program. The role of the counselor is crucial to the attainment of program goals. The role is clearly defined.

One counselor, who stood her ground well, put it this way: "In schools where the counselor's role has been clearly defined, there has been keen interest and participation in the programs by staff and community groups. Coupled with intensive efforts in curriculum and cultural enrichment, the guidance program has brought about improved attendance and behaviors, changed attitudes toward schooling and improved pupil adjust."[1]

The roles themselves do not change although the ways in which they are exercised may well differ from one school to another. For example, in Boston, the Great Cities School Improvement Program added counselors to the staff of depressed area schools, thus providing a counselor for each grade, 7, 8, and 9.

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[1] Carmela Mercurig, "Higher Horizons Program", Guidance News, (February-April 1964), p. 5.

The counselors in these schools are involved more with social science agencies and with the motivational aspects of keeping the potential dropout in school and applying himself.

There are instances, however, in which the role of the counselor is contracted rather than expanded. In some programs which focus on team teaching the role of the counselor is reduced in the academic area. The responsibility of programming, as well as curriculum, is placed with the teachers. The counselors are involved in extensive interviewing of students and parents and depth counseling of students.

Jacob Landers, using the functions of counselors, indicates the role of the counselor in working with disadvantaged students as:

1. An intensive program of individual counseling.
2. The interpretation of the role of the counselor to all those engaged in the total education program.
3. Emphasis upon a dynamic program of group guidance.
4. Interpreting the culture of the children and the community to the teachers.
5. The inculcation of the staff with a healthy disrespect for the results of verbal I. Q. tests.
6. Educating the parents to believe in their children.

7. A happy marriage of counseling and instruction.
8. Contacts with social and community agencies, coordination of cultural activities and school-wide planning and articulation.
9. Possessing a better knowledge than ever before of the total college picture--standards for admission, scholarship opportunities, flexibility in programming, work possibilities, social climate, and general, current atmosphere.[2]

A caution is in order. A person cannot always work equally well with all students. There are times when an initial meeting of the counselor and the student is one in which the chemistry between these two does not occur. There are failures; there are near misses. The counselor should be able to identify these situations - ask for assistance from other counselors, even transfer the student to another counselor. He should not have guilt feelings about incompatibles or failures if honest effort has been given.

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[2] Keynote address by Jacob Landers delivered at the Eighth Annual Institute for Secondary School Counselors sponsored by the George Washington University, Washington, D. C., April 7, 1962.

CHAPTER III

Establishing Rapport with Disadvantaged Youth

An immediate reaction by many counselors to the question, "How do you build rapport with disadvantaged youth," is not infrequently stated as, "Why you build rapport with the disadvantaged student just like you do with any other kid." Some individuals feel that the needs, desires, frustrations, and pressures which are felt by young people during the ambivalent period called adolescence are about the same anywhere in our culture, felt by all young people, and must be given sensitive treatment in terms of the behavior patterns that are peculiar to that age group. Others, underscore the fact that differences must not be emphasized by pulling them out for special treatment. Recognition of the complicating factors which spring from the circumstances of the status of the disadvantaged demands modification of such broad, democractic-sounding statements.

It is a certainty that the counselor must show the same principles of building rapport with disadvantaged youth as he does with other students. However, to accomplish this act effectively, he must achieve a somewhat specialized extension of his efforts. The counselor has to develop and use a unique approach to the student and his problems in terms of certain factors that cannot be ignored. There must be an empathetic awareness of the underlying dynamics of minority youth behavior. Equally important, the counselor must examine and analyze his own attitudes. Every counselor who works with disadvantaged students should understand to what extent his counseling is an expression of his own self. Far too often he is unaware of what his attitudes really are, unaware of how he verbalizes them and unaware of the actions he takes with his disadvantaged students. Sometimes counselors admit this lack of awareness. A counselor in Detroit summed up her experiences: "I have had difficulty in relating to students on several occasions. It came from a hasty conclusion, without understanding the situation. The youngster felt I was trying to make life difficult for him. . ."

If the counselor is to make meaningful and effective interpretations of the disadvantaged youth to himself, his teachers, and his parents, he must make full use of these aroused sensitivities.

The essentials of rapport-building are not unlike those principles that every counselor has studied and discussed in his professional training period. Basic to the development of effective counseling interpersonal relations is a warm, honest, and open approach. This approach eludes concrete description but is a feeling of acceptance and human warmth that the counselor radiates, that is easily sensed, and that is often communicated without words.

Another element is the maintenance of an atmosphere that is free of judgment, of criticism, and one that encourages and sustains free student expression of negative as well as positive feelings. A supportive attitude furthers student self-analysis and realistic development within the limitations of the student's assets and liabilities.

Prior to any face-to-face meeting of the counselor and student, many counselors find time to take specific preparatory actions. One newly-arrived counselor engages in activities designed to help him become a familiar part of the scenery in the school. He declares that his newness to the staff would give him an unfamiliar high visibility. Being seen in the playground after school, at a game, in a classroom helpes students to crystallize the new counselor's involvement with the school. Engaging in conversation with students, entering into discussions, or "just talking around" will help students to crystallize the personality characterization of the counselor.

Similar activities within the confines of the school neighborhood served to establish positive community involvement and identification.

One counselor felt that "school teachers and counselors could achieve more with deprived youngsters if they (counselors) shed all traces of stuffiness and set out to win the respect of children rather than demanding it."

If disadvantaged youth have any keen perception, it is in judging characters of adults. They are seldom fooled, at least for long, by feigned concern, pseudo-acceptance, and a facade of general over friendliness and effort. But in the presence of sustained and consistent sincere and objectively displayed attitudes, these students will sense it and respond in positive fashion.

Counselors are keenly aware of whether this point has been reached with the student. One counselor described her having made it as the time: "When the guidance door opens, and a student asks, 'Are you busy?'. . . When they seek a second and third conference; when they ask you to write recommendations . . ."

Another counselor felt this way: "When a boy comes in on his own and asks for help, when he wants to discuss any problem. . . when he feels I can help him in any situation, I feel I have reached him."

Counselors judge their success in rapport-building in various ways: when the student speaks spontaneously, when they express hostility, when the student does not feel that he has to cover-up or hide his feelings, when it is felt that the 'con' is not needed, when they begin to talk about themselves, their family, their problems. Often when the student opens up with honest complaints, hopes, and dreams, even expresses some of his bitterness - "I know I have reached them." Sometimes, to some counselors, the student is 'reached' when he feels free to talk, when he is calm, even when he becomes aroused and frustrated.

The range of indices of success is wide. Some counselors felt that the most obvious indication of having reached a student was the positive change in behavior, as reported by teachers, parents, or agencies. Others placed their belief in daily attendance, grades, and improvement of discipline.

Just as the counselor is aware of having established rapport, so is he equally aware of his failures. Some counselors express it this way: "When they can't talk to me, I know I haven't reached them." ". . . sometimes they just don't show up."

Others feel failure when the student does not show up (for a counseling session). Still other counselors realistically view the entire relationship in this way: "We all have difficulty understanding our children sometimes . . . Are we expecting too much?" "There are some students and parents we cannot reach."

Just as disadvantaged students come in all sizes, shapes, and colors, so do counselors come to the student with common principles of counseling but with attitudes, personalities, and sensitivities of varying degrees.

If the counseling efforts are to be effective, rapport must be established successfully, it is the stone upon which other counseling blocks are laid. If the specialized extension of counseling effort is to be realized, then failure must be pre-empted by stabilizing his rapport-building techniques upon a recognition and understanding of psychological, social, economic, and cultural foci that affect the behavior of disadvantaged youth and their relationships with him, by examining himself, and by meaningful, sincere, and effective application.

CHAPTER IV

Counseling the Disadvantaged Student

In the past, little effort was made to provide guidance to all students. The counselor's load consisted of those "problem students" identified and referred by agonized and upset teachers and administrators. The recent concern for the disadvantaged has broadened its clientele. Early identification of problem children, of potential dropouts, of learning problems, of personal problem types among all students is now an increasing reality. Some form of guidance and counseling is almost a common element in all programs for the disadvantaged. Such an emphasis cuts deep into the heart of guidance-counseling techniques.

Counseling the disadvantaged student is an intellectually and emotionally demanding job. There is no point in looking around for the "wonder" counselor, the miracle worker who innately possesses all the requisite skills and uses them as natural gifts. Few, if any, such counselors exist. The methods have to be studied; the skills have to be learned; a reasonably intelligent, open-minded and determined individual can learn them.

Unfortunately, when the matter of counseling the disadvantaged student is discussed, there is all too frequently the expectation to hear of new counseling techniques, of new methods, of new skills. Those methods and techniques already learned by the counselor are adequate for working with the disadvantaged boy or girl. A sense of timing, and acquiring and understanding the facts and feelings of his life, his family, his desires and dislikes, the way he is, why he is as he is, and how he perceives the world have been given attention too little, to too few, for too short a time.

The counselor must have a working definition of counseling that with experience becomes his definition of counseling. He must have individuality; he should not be an identical reproduction of another. The surgeon is expected to be an individual; it is expected that he know techniques and where to use them; but, it is not expected that the surgical action that he takes vary with his mood. Counseling the disadvantaged student can be as delicate a task as open heart surgery. Sensing when to vary techniques, knowing when to speak, when not to speak, and understanding the language of the student can make the difference between successful counseling and alienation or discouraging confusion. There is no one and only way to counsel this student; it takes a knowledgeable practitioner to know which variations are optional, which are dangerous, and when and how to vary them. Counselors describe it as: "One must at times be directive when necessary and at the same time particularly sensitive as to the moment one should be nondirective."

There is a general agreement among counselors that the counseling interview, the face-to-face encounter between student and counselor, is the heart of the counseling process. A continuum of counseling emphasis exists with the nondirective approach on one hand and the directive approach at the other. Few counselors are prescriptive with consistency to any one approach,be it directive or nondirective. Counseling should always be focused on the student, but it should be eclectic in approach and ideas that are helpful and useful in working with these students. This sentiment is echoed by a counselor who indicated: " The guidance and counseling techniques that I feel would be most functional with this segment of society would be eclectic."

Many counselors in working with disadvantaged youth find that they are directive in the early stages of counseling. They assume a more active and aggressive role and exercise greater responsibility. One counseling coordinator related the experience that: "Members of our counseling staff believe,that in many cases, nondirective counseling techniques must be modified in dealing with the socially disadvantaged. They have found it essential to play an active role." Not all counselors, however, agree with this point of view. Some feel that "the direct approach with a disadvantaged group is only justified in cases of emergencies." Still, other counselors feel that "creativity, responsibility, maturity, self-actualization, mobilization, and ego-strengthening are not facilitated by the direct approach in counseling."

Counselors use many ways to reach students, to help set direction, to develop understandings, and to assist these young people in bettering parental-child relations. Sometimes the colorful private language of America's ghetto youth is spoken. I'm stalled (puzzled). Some well-known idioms as "pod", "crib", "bread", "copping", "gold", "kick", "on ice", are used on occasion. Some workers use friendliness mixed with a respect for the student as an individual. Speaking on a level that is understandable, but remaining professional seems to work for other counselors.

Without doubt, the disadvantaged student needs individual counseling. He needs to be able to share the time of an interested adult in a quiet, private situation. It provides a listener, someone interested in him and things that are important to him, and an adult to have all to himself. The felt values and advantages of individual counseling, however, are frequently lessened by the pressures of time, space and privacy, and large numbers of students. One counselor states the case this way: "One shot interviewing called counseling bothers me - it's better than nothing, but it is not counseling." Another counselor felt that "even five minutes . . . creates a bond in spite of the pressure of time."

Not all counselors are struck by the merits of individual counseling and the high visibility and prominence afforded counseling in schools. Gordon believes that: "The needs of the socially disadvantaged children require that we remove the interview and counseling from their central and dominating position in guidance . . . we have come to view the counseling relationship . . . as a tool of far greater significance than its merits. However, we should not throw out counseling altogether."[3]

Individual counseling is indeed indispensible and irreplaceable. However, although much of the counselor's work with disadvantaged youth is individual counseling, the pressure of time, large numbers of students, the wide range of activities in which counselors are involved, and the commonality of the kinds of information, concerns, and interests of these youth make group guidance a reasonable undertaking.

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[3] Edmund W. Gordon, "Social Status Differences: Counseling and Guidance for Disadvantaged Youth," Guidance and the School Dropout, Daniel Schreiber (ed.). (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association 1964), p. 203.

There are several advantages in meeting groups. Group guidance focuses collective judgment on common problems. In many instances, information and full exploration of dimensions are contributions that the individual interview will not produce. Students should talk about their problems. Many of them are able to discuss in a group problems that they find difficult, if not impossible, to discuss in a private interview. Ideas and suggestions are accepted many times more readily from their peers that were earlier offered by the counselor and rejected. Then, too, the problem case always is classed as more urgent. The disadvantaged student who needs a minimum of information and counseling to solve his problem usually gets the least attention. Group guidance provides some assurance that this student does not have to "do something special" to get some guidance or counseling.

Group guidance does not replace individual counseling; rather it supplements and supports individual counseling. If group guidance is effective, then there should be an increase in the demand for individual counseling. Judicious use of group guidance and individual counseling may well result in greater student self-referrals or "drop-ins", students who are better informed about services available, their own need for these services, and, finally, a "good press" for the counselor among the students. Group guidance, nevertheless, is accepted in different ways by different workers. Some counselors view it favorably and suggest that: "The group guidance technique must be highly developed by the counselor who works with the disadvantaged. Peer group influence is so great in our setting, one must work through the group in order to get through to the individual." One counselor of Cuban students said: "Students do not mind coming into my office in groups. They lean on each other to reassure themselves." A worker in Cleveland said: "Some disadvantaged kids really 'take-off' in group sessions. Counselors need to get out of the way and let these kids talk among themselves. It helps if the counselors know the environment of these kids so that they will know what is reality for them."

Other workers express reservation. For example, one counselor felt that: "Group guidance has its place if well-structured, and if the faculty is behind this type of activity."

Still, there are those counselors who feel that the value and effectiveness of group guidance is decidedly small. A counselor of Negro students in St. Louis commented, "These students will not open up or 'expose' their problems in a group. They are indifferent, give expected answers, are quiet, and some feel nobody ever listens to them in groups."

Some others express their failure by stating: "We have attempted group guidance and it has been a failure. It is time-consuming and does not meet the immediate needs of the students. If a youngster has a deep-seated problem, group guidance is no good for this student." Another counselor said, "I do not have time for group guidance. I tried it with the freshmen, I don't know what was accomplished."

Some counselors express concern about other aspects of group guidance. Some counselors feel that one or two students in a group session color the thinking of the group, and that usually there is someone in a group who wants to be Bob Hope. Others dislike the fact that many students just sit and listen, and the counselor does not know if they are being reached. A counselor in an elementary school commented: "In group guidance, children often react to the adult in the group rather than to each other."

Role playing, autobiographies, buzz sessions, tape recorders, "bull sessions", telephones, even walkie-talkies have been explored. These trials have been met with varying degrees of success. Counselors are not in agreement as to their effectiveness with these students. One counselor said, "Role playing is excellent! It is educationally sound, and teaches the students to be more verbal."

Some report that they "have not used role playing in school because of lack of time, but use it in a community center where I work. I have found it effective with kids of all levels of ability." Another counselor reported that he tried to project the student into the other person's place to see how he would react. He felt this had been effective in reducing discipline cases.

Some counselors were less enthusiastic. One said, "Role playing we limit because these students are self-conscious and are limited in their verbal expresssion." Still another counselor feels "role playing may be useful with very young children, but ineffective with junior and senior high school students."

CHAPTER V

Tests, Testing, and the Disadvantaged Youth

From a sociological point of view, the development and ever-widening use of standardized tests in the United States is a ready example of an innovation and its subsequent acceptance by the society's members.

A precise count of the number of standardized tests being administered every year or the proportion of the population (students and adults) being tested is hard to come by.

In 1961, Buros[4] published a rather complete bibliography of tests which included 2, 126 separate, different tests or test batteries. Although 15 classifications are provided, the bulk of these tests fall under the general heading of achievement tests (46. 4 per cent), while the remainder fall under personality and intelligence test classifications.

Equally difficult to ascertain is the number of tests given annually. A recent annual survey by the American Textbook Publishers Institute disclosed that approximately 75 million test booklets and 66 million separate answer sheets were sold in 1961. These materials had a total value of $11, 490, 000. Seven years previously, in 1954, according to the ATPI report, combined sales of 82 million booklets and answer sheets amounted to $5, 420, 000. While it is extremely difficult to obtain the proportion of kinds of tests sold, a conservative estimate based on this report indicates that approximately 100 million commercially produced ability tests were administered in 1961.[5]

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[4] Oscar K. Buros. (ed.), Tests in Print. (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1961), p. 19.

But this is only part of the facts. In New York State alone, the Regents Examiniation Program administers more than a million examiniations each year. The Bureau of Educational Research of the Board of Education of the City of New York has constructed, standardized, and administered several different tests to its public school children in New York City each year. Many other states and several other large cities with comparable testing programs, as well as the College Board with its tests administered annually. are not included in tabulations of test sales anywhere.

In the United States there are probably more ability tests administered annually than there are people. In the institutional area of education it is estimated that between 75 and 90 percent of all public elementary and secondary school systems in the country make use of standardized tests at least once between kindergarten and grade 12.[6]

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[5] David A. Goslin, The Search for Ability. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1963), p. 53.

Some states have enacted legislation regarding testing programs. In 1961, the State Legislature of California enacted a bill requiring every public school in the state to administer standardized tests of intelligence, reading, arithmetic, and language usage to all pupils in the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades each year. Even the dates for test administration are specified in the act. Some 700,000 pupils annually, or 2,100,000 different pupils over a three-year period, will become involved in this massive program.

Testing in secondary schools was given added impetus in 1958 by Title V-A of the National Defense Education Act. This Act made funds available to states to "establish and maintain a program for testing aptitudes and abilities of students in public secondary schools.[7]

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[6] Ibid, p. 57.

[7] U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, "Guidance, Counseling and Testing: Identification and Encouragement of Able Students--State Programs." Regulations, Sections 501 through 504(a) of Title V, Part A, National Defense Education Act of 1958, pp. 7-8.

Federal assistance was also extended to nonpublic secondary schools under Section 504(b) of Title V-A.[8] This makes it possible for all children attending nonpublic secondary schools to be tested sometime during secondary school attendance in order to identify students with outstanding ability. Latest figures reveal that about 35 per cent of all testing going on in secondary schools is financed by Federal funds.

There can be little doubt that testing is here to stay. There can be little disagreement that tests often play an important part in many decisions which sometimes critically affect the lives and careers of young people in our society. It is also likely that tests have an effect on the inspiration and aspirations of our youth and their parents. If this is so, what of the disadvantaged child whose inability to compete test-wise not only is underscored by his relatively low socio-economic status but is constricted by comparing him with a standardization group of which he was not a member? What of the counselor and his use of tests with the disadvantaged students?

Regardless of the emphasis given to testing and the types of tests used with these students, tests and testing have an essential place and use in the counseling process. But the use of standardized tests with disadvantaged students is limited because of their performance on these tests.

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[8] Ibid., p. 8.

Presently standard intelligence tests are strongly middle-class oriented in content. Instruments now being used require verbal competence, especially reading skills, spelling skills, and vocabulary acquisition. The language of verbal tests is not that of disadvantaged students. Even in the area of personality tests, there are strong disclaimers for the suitability of these tests for educationally-culturally deprived students. Many tests present standardization groups of which the disadvantaged youth was not a member. The 1937 Stanford-Benet standardization sample, although checked to include a representative cross-section of socio-economic groups, was a little higher in socio-economic level than the general population. There was an excess of urban to rural population. Lastly, the population sampled was limited to native-born white subjects. The 1960 revision of this test did not comprise a representative sample of American school children.

The exclusion of groups in norm groups extends beyond socio-economic urban-rural and regional bounds. The Negro, in the main, and other minority groups have been excluded historically. Almost without exception all measurements of the Negro have been made with tests standardized basically on northern, urban whites.

The performance of these disadvantaged youth on tests in present use is of concern to counselors. These students typically earn lower intelligence test scores than do their higher socio-economic counterparts. Standardized tests may not afford reliable differentiations in the range of minority group scores. Sound or telling forecasting for the culturally deprived may be strikingly different from that for the standardization group and is dependent upon an understanding of the group's social and cultural background.

These tests require reading skills, spelling, and vocabulary. These youngsters are not readers and generally are poor school performers. Often they do not understand the directions and do not follow them. Many students are unconcerned about tests and test results. One counselor related that: . . . . "I have seen them fill in the answer sheets without reading the test questions." Another insisted that she had seen them "take the test lightly . . . and fall asleep while taking the test."

Physical and psychological conditions can be overwhelming for many students. Hunger, fatigue, parental and family conflicts may affect the testing situation. In the main, these youth are not test-wise, are not sophisticated in test-taking. Even the simple mechanics of a separate answer sheet can be a problem to many.

The problem of rapport between the counselor and the student in the testing situation is difficulty enough, but the problem may loom even larger when the counselor is white and the student is a Negro. Sincerity, warmth, and the incorporation of other rapport-building attitudes and techniques into the interpersonal contact may be met with protective suspicion, wariness, hostility, or withdrawal behavior. Overt behavior must not evoke immediate, hasty reaction.

All is not despair there are actions that can be taken to support and assist the student. Students can become test-wise. Understanding of principles underlying problems can be developed. Strict following of directions can be developed and practiced. The mechanics of test-taking with opportunity for familiarization can become less foreign. A more difficult and trying aspect of the disadvantaged student and testing is developing a positive attitude, a motivation for taking a test. This strikes at the heart of the counselor's functions.

The future seems brighter than the past, however; some changes are taking place. Test developers increasingly are including disadvantaged and minority youth in test standardization groups. A few tests have been developed and designed for testing Negroes within a white culture. Counselors must look for evidence that norms are representative of the group to be tested and compared. School norms, local norms, or area norms should be built. One counselor reported that use of state norms in grades 7 and 9 revealed their unsuitability for his students. Just as the national population and the use of tests are increasing, so is the frequency with which disadvantaged youth and its minority components are being tested and compared. This increase provokes a responsibility to provide equitable standards of comparison. Ignoring the problem does not make it less real. Some counselors feel strongly about this and insist that because of misuse of test scores in school "it would seem extremely advisable to not use them . . ." Others feel that test results should not be placed in the pupil's permanent record card. Still others are of the opinion that too many different tests are in use and that testing occurs too often.

If the counselor tests to understand the student better - to provide information which may be of great potential value in the change (counseling) process - one must realize that tests still are among the most important evaluative and prognostic tools available. Routine and mechanical use of these tools is of little, if any, value. Acceptance of test scores as fixed levels of performance or potential must be discarded for planned and imaginative remedial and enrichment activities. Comparison of student test performance with that of other disadvantaged youth, with his previous test performance, or with that performance of students not disadvantaged depends upon counselor intelligence, good judgment, attitude, and sense of responsibility. One counselor summed it up by saying: "Our teachers try to ignore the I. Q. and TEACH."

CHAPTER VI

Educational and Vocational Counseling

Educational and vocational counseling of the disadvantaged youth calls for particular basic knowledge and understandings. The counselor must have an intimate knowledge of the nonprofessional occupational world. He must know the preparation required to qualify for those jobs and where such qualifying preparation may be obtained. Above all, he must know the degree and extent of opportunity available in present day America. But cautions are posted; there are dangers. The counselor should not exhibit an opinion that influences his working with these young people. He should not try to sell his opinion. Should a youngster of low scholastic aptitude go as far as possible - high school, junior college, college? Should he quit school, or should he learn a trade? The environmentally deprived, the culturally disadvantaged often may be slow to learn, but this does not mean that he is unable to learn. The physical style of life, the low income cognitive style must not preempt sound educational planning as indicated by potential, ability, interest, and desire. Some counselors have thought that their most important function was to guide all disadvantaged students into vocational, nonacademic education. Others thought that they were being helpful when they counseled the disadvantaged to stop school any time a job became available. The fate of the disadvantaged student is not for the counselor to decide nor should his feelings and attitudes be influential in the decision process of the student. The die is not his to throw; the decision is that of the student. Having a trade or being skilled indeed is important for the student who is not qualified for a profession, but the further he goes educationally, the more greatly enhanced are the chances for his own general education and that of his children.

It is not unusual to hear one say that "they do not conform." The disadvantaged student is not unaware of conformity. More times than is always apparent, conformity is the end. For example, when asked "What would you like to be?", it is not unusual for the lower class student to name professional and managerial occupations. When queried about what his real aspirations are, one notices the lowering of aspirations. The semi-skilled occupations gain prominence. The ideal aspiration he never expects to achieve.

The Negro student must be given disproportionate attention. Few of these students aspire, ideally or realistically, to skilled occupations even though they are usually much more specifically knowledgeable about semi-skilled and unskilled occupations than they are about professional and managerial. The employment trend is moving away from these occupational categories and is swinging toward the skilled or higher occupations. This movement means that most lower class youths are headed for unemployment. It would seem that if changes are not made in the plans, preparation, and vocational knowledge of disadvantaged youth, a great many of these young people will find themselves employed in semi-skilled occupations.

The Negro student presents a special problem to many counselors. The uninformed counselor is not aware of the Negro's increasing opportunities for training, education, the where-with-all of loans and scholarships, and the widening range and variety of careers open. The Negro increasingly is filling a significant number and variety of jobs at nearly all levels. No longer is it necessary to single out medicine, law, the ministry, and teaching as the only fields into which Negro students should be guided. From craftsman and technical operator to clerical and saleswork, swinging through electronics and computer to banking, the Negro is to be found gainfully employed. It should be made clear to the disadvantaged Negro student that many of these persons are not "instant Negroes", "exceptions", or the "unusual" products of white institutions. To be sure, some are; but many are graduates of ghetto life, poor educational backgrounds, and the "Negro" college. He is the product of self-development, self-realization, aspiration, ambition and a keen sensitivity to opportunity. Barriers of any kind were perceived as obstacles to overcome and not as walls at which one quits. This individual who is representative of the ambition, drive, preparation, occupational aspiration, and mobility that our society promotes should be given high visibility. Many of the examples presented to the student, however, are individuals unknown to the student, unreal to him, and remote from his world. More meaningful and more real are those models in the community of the student who are graduated from high school, college, or training, and who are employed and are being "successful."

One question that arises is, "Should the Negro student prepare for an occupation in which Negroes are now employed sparsely, if at all, or should he train for the open available market?" This is not a new question. It was posed during the 1930's, again in the 1940's, but is raised less frequently now. The decision belongs to the student. Recent trends of employed, the growing numbers of Negroes making inroads into heretofore relatively unexplored or virgin occupational areas, and the experience of many who were qualified to apply for jobs when they came available, would serve as educational and occupational models and sources of information that the student could use in his decision-making process. One counselor looked at it this way: "Negro youngsters have to face the fact that many job areas are not still open to them . . . they need more than one outlet vocationally." Perhaps, the counselor should re-examine his concept of success. For many of the disadvantaged students whom he counsels, success may be characterized in far different fashion and hold different expectations than are anticipated generally. These students certainly have their own concept of success. This is the starting point.

The practices followed by counselors in their conduct of educational and vocational counseling are far from common. For example, counselors at a junior high school in Cleveland make visits to their feeder elementary schools to facilitate the articulation process and orientation of the new entering students. These workers meet with homeroom groups, administer a self-inventory, and talk with groups of students about the high school programs. Interviews are held with the student, singly or with their parents, regarding his school objectives, the academic record reviewed, and a program planned which meets the student's needs and capabilities.

Counselors of a large high school in Boston visit all freshman homerooms where personal questionaires are completed. Discussions are held about the courses that the students have chosen and the importance of their academic records. Strong efforts are made to help in their orientation to high school.

Sometimes educational and vocational guidance are incorporated into the regular classroom with the counselor acting as a teacher. One rural high school in West Virginia includes educational and vocational guidance in the regular classroom work. Ninth-grade civics includes occupational information; in the tenth-grade, the Kuder Vocational Interest Inventory is administered and each student writes a paper on a job he selects or his field of aptitude or interest. A career unit is built around the Science Research Associates Career File. Occupational seminars are held in grade 12; the General Aptitude Test Battery is administered by the State Employment Office and assistance provided in job placement of noncollege-bound seniors.

Not all is sweetness and light; counselors differ as to when vocational counseling should occur. A counselor in Detroit related that "junior high school youngsters are so taken up with their need for basic education and social interaction that vocational guidance at this time is premature. A knowledge of different occupations should be given, but the child should not be directed or guided into a particular area." Just as practices vary in hour and when guidance is carried on, so do counselors vary in their specific vocational guidance focus on disadvantaged students. A West Virginia junior high school counselor in a school with a high dropout rate related that he reminds them that they do not have to go to college but that he encourages them to complete high school. Another counselor in St. Louis tries to place students who are not interested in college into work experiences where they learn a skill for full time job placement after graduation. Still, another counselor in a large city high school indicated that potential dropouts are counseled but if the dropout decision were made, an exit interview was scheduled and efforts were made to try to enroll the student in Adult Education evening classes for the Manpower Development Training Act program.

Regardless of the interest and energy of the counselor or the procedures employed, the matter of educational or vacational guidance cannot be the sole responsibility and function of the counselor. He is the specialist indeed, but his efforts must be supplemented, complemented, and reinforced in classrooms, study halls, gyms, halls, offices of the school. In some schools, the classroom teachers do perform these guidance services. But just as the counselor needs the teacher, so does he need the parents of the student.

Gaining the attention, interest, and participation of parents is achieved in many ways. Some counselors arrange conferences with one or both parents, even at an hour other than day school hours. Other counselors hold group sessions with parents about vocational and educational planning of their children. Informational sessions are held. These group sessions are usually brief, few, and lead into scheduled interviews with particular parents about their children. Most counselors are in agreement that educational and vocational guidance has its beginnings in the elementary grades and should have parental active involvement. Ask the parent of the culturally deprived student what vocational roles they wish for their children. Most of them respond: "I want him to do something better than I do; I got a job at fourteen and what did it get me. He oughta stay in school and be somebody." Pamphlets, books, monographs, films, guest speakers in classes or assembly, career conferences, bulletin board displays, field trips and group discussions are some of the materials used with students and parents. Just as the child is not aware that someone "got out" so are the parents, many times, lacking word about this motivational model. To the parents, just as with the child, is the model more real and behaviorable if he had lived in the block, they had known him, had known the face, the name, or that he had been "one of them."

Some changes seem forecast. The quantity and quality of materials for use in schools is increasing. This is especially true at the elementary grades. Although occupational materials exist in quantity at the present time, it is very likely that even larger quantities of occupational information will be needed in the next decade or two. The demand for these materials directed to the needs of the disadvantaged and to minority groups will be met. The rapid growth of technological and electronic applications will make possible student retrieval of information. Closed circuit TV, audio-visual applications, data processing, computer instruction systems are possible applications. Even now there is available a computerized retrieval system of occupational information. The future role of the counselor in vocational and educational guidance could change to some extent. But with any role change, the function and mission will not change nor will the responsibility for the culturally deprived be lessened. Indeed the screw tightens - the responsibility may be even greater in that day.

CHAPTER VII

Motivating the Disadvantaged Student

Most counselors generally view motivation as the student's response to some stimuli outside of himself. This way of looking at student motivation means that the counselor structures events, verbal or physical, in such a way as to assist the student in progressing along "the way he should go" and ending at some correct or proper points. Thus, student behavior becomes the result of forces upon him. All manner of techniques and processes are utilized to effect the desired behavior of this external concept of motivation.

Counselors frequently perceive this student as a lump of clay, sometimes moldy, to be shaped into something. He cannot judge for himself what he should be nor can he be trusted to do the molding himself. If the youngster does decide for himself and consequently has problems, then the counselor and program staff have to right the cart. If this effort is successful, then the student is "motivated" and is able to adjust to the "good and right" school experiences. If this action fails, he is unmotivated.

Much of the discussion and description of the characteristics of of disadvantaged children have focused on their weaknesses, liabilities, or limitations. They are characterized as having tendencies toward self-depreciation, depressed self-concepts, low level of aspiration, and lack of motivation. But often working with disadvantaged young people one recognizes that selective motivation is a property among these students. Our inability to find motivation is a result of looking for its presence through the myopic lens of tradition - traditional form and the expected traditional areas. Using these glasses, we shall never discover motivation. Just as middle-class students are motivated, so are disadvantaged students motivated by _some_ factors. They are creative in _some_ situations. They are proficient in _some_ tasks and under _some_ circumstances. Counseling and guidance involves a relationship between counselor and student that gives prominence and priority to motivating the student and setting direction.

School is a new adventure for all children. The middle-class child leaves for school with mother's quiet admonitions, "Do you best in school today," ringing in his ears. He has been primed for school by frequent reminders of "next year you can go to school too" or "wait till you get in school and make good grades." Upon his return home from school, he is greeted with "What did you learn new today?" or "Did you have a good day in school?" This new adventure of school is for many youngsters a source of fear and excitement. The disadvantaged student seldom hears a "Do your best in school today." The fact of the matter is that the low income mother or father probably has left for work when the child leaves for school. Many of these boys and girls come to school without breakfast; maybe they did have a Pepsi and potato chips bought on the way to school. For some students, the orderly, structured, formal atmosphere of the school, sharply contrasting with their disorganized, unstable, noisy, home conditions, is a source of insecurity and frustration. Emotional insecurity and rejection inhibit motivation and learning. Poor perception in the knowledge and the use of those things necessary for successful early school achievement leads to an ever-widening gap between the middle-class and disadvantaged student.

The girl who wants to type just might learn to type. The failing student who can't perform in General Mathematics might pass the course if the problems were meaningful and had some application to him and his world. A budget problem of how to budget weekly wages similar to or identical with his parents might help the entire family, especially if it were integrated with other related or pertinent courses. Even failure without ridicule, embarrassment, or judgment may be self-satisfying some time. Just trying a task that you dearly wanted to try and failing can lead to discovery. One counselor reacted this way: "Motivation of the disadvantaged is the hardest problem we have. Sometimes we fail completely in motivation. It's hard to measure."

A prime ingredient of motivating the disadvantaged student is some small measure of success. Many of these youngsters have a fear of failure - one more failure. They take easiest courses. They should be encouraged to try, to attempt some of the courses, tasks, skills within their aspirations, aptitudes, and interests. Every effort should be made for them to make use of and apply the knowledge and skills they do possess to the world and work of the school. These are age-old words and timeless concepts, but only limited uses are still made of them. Many of these young people never tried much of anything.

Many of the disadvantaged children have not and do not work toward long-range goals. Goals are immediate, physical, tangible, concrete, and satisfying. Counselors should assist the student in developing and meeting a series of short-range attainable goals. These goals could be and in many counseling situations are, weekly. Counselors will help the student to set up weekly goals and together they meet at the end of the week to discuss progress or achievement. This practice provides an immediate, short-term goal for those who need it and does not preempt the gradual time extension of the goal and achievement of that goal.

Sometimes the goal achievement is concrete. Words are typed at some set spped; pieces of work are completed; or a period of training is terminated. There are instances in which the monthly check has been the tangible evidence of performance. In West Virginia, a "Walking Check," not exceeding 25¢ per pupil per day, is given to youngsters who have to and do walk a distance of between two and five miles to catch a school bus. This is done to encourage school attendance.

But successful motivation of culturally deprived youth also must concern itself with internalization by the student. It must deal with the internal drives which they possess and which self-actualizes them in non-school situations. These young people do recognize their limited knowledge, their lop-sided experience, and their progress or lack of it. They are aware of the underlining of facts, of reality, of "cognitive experiences." It does not escape their attention that there is a lack of stress placed on what they think, feel, believe, need, and want. One counselor states the case this way: "Many slum children with high ability are not motivated in school and are often frustrated because the curriculum has little relevance to their daily lives." Moveover, the pupils lack the stimulation that might come from association with children from the middle-class homes. Many feel that it doesn't make any difference what they do; who cares? Others do not receive any guidance at home and, therefore, need more than average support by other adults with whom they come in contact.

Motivating the culturally deprived student involves attitudes peculiar to certain groups. For example, a counselor in Pittsburgh related that "some Polish families have expressed the feeling that a girl should not have too much education, for she then 'becomes too good for' her parents or the man she will marry." In such cases, motivation of the girl is difficult. Many Cuban students, who are in this country, are not motivated and do not apply themselves according to some counselors. They take the attitude that they will return to their former schools and finish high school at home. Although family ties are strong, in many families the father is in Cuba, in prison or still residing there. These children live with one parent, uncles and aunts, or friends of the family. Still, some of these youth feel that communism will soon come to the United States and everything will be taken away, so why study? Too often, these students have little confidence in anyone or in the future.

There are students of the disadvantaged group who feel things just happen; they never make things happen. This belief that one does not control one's own fate is probably most true in the children of

Caucasian parents, rural and urban, who have been on public welfare for generations. One counselor who works with these young people said: "They take the attitude - why should I study? For what? Many have had very poor male work models, since the father may never have had a job during their lifetime. Being on relief has become a way of life." Even the mobility that is a characteristic of our American nation can have detrimental affects upon children. Families that move frequently within a city or from city to city may send children to school who are not motivated because of the frequent interruptions in education and socialization. Feelings of "rootlessness" are developed and produce negative results in the personal self-actualization of these children.

The methods, techniques, and actions employed by counselors to stimulate, to develop, to motivate their disadvantaged students are as varied as the number of counselors facing the problem. Some counselors advocate remediation of poorly learned basic skills. Some counselors feel that: "When basic skills are not mastered in the elementary grades, it is very difficult to motivate students who, as a result, have had a series of failures in school. In some of these cases, efforts to help are too late and the student is a lost cause." Others turn to more severe methods. A counselor in one large city reported that "threats are made in terms of emphasizing failures and punishment for non-performance and reporting to parents by telephone." In the schools of Boston, motivation is attempted by enforced rules and regulations. The counselor checks on the daily attendance and homework of chronic absentees and truants, and receives daily progress reports from their teachers. Through these daily contacts, some students not only enjoy the attention they are receiving, but respond positively to attendance and achievement. Some counselors object strongly to such display of force and feel that "force of any type or degree will not work because the student will rebel, and is resistant to any authority figure . . . appeal to his (student's) reason." One counselor advised that one should take a "middle ground approach of being firm but fair."

The rapport and relationship existing between the counselor and the student and its powerful motivational potential is illustrated best by two counselors of Indian students who reported that: "Warm acceptance and recognition are powerful motivating influences with my counselees. Indians will work for people they respect. They generally will not work for themselves only. If someone they respect says it is important to learn, they will accept this advice."

Just as educational and vocational counseling can ill afford to bypass the parents, so is the effort to motivate the student destined to waste if no counselor-parent relationship is developed. Parents can be helpful in motivating students. Calling on the phone, sending letters following each grading period, holding individual or group meetings, visiting homes, and inviting parents to events, activities, and scheduled group and individual conferences and interviews of the school, are some of the techniques that can be useful in getting parents involved and interested in the school achievement of their children. In at least two cities, St. Louis and Toledo, parents sign "pledges of cooperation" with the local schools to get their children to school daily and on time, to provide a dictionary and a well-lighted place to study in the home, to insist that the child spend some time studying each day, to visit the child's teacher during each semester, to discuss the report card with the child, to provide the child with a library card and suitable books, and to impress upon the child that 'sucess in school is his most important business.'

Another techniques which involves parents is: "A system of curfew that requires primary grade children to be home before dark, intermediate grade children home by 7:45 p.m., and junior high school children home by 8:30 p.m." Parents are encouraged to set aside periods for family activities and discussions in the evenings at home. The father is urged to assume a more positive and active role in family life. Parents are advised to set examples for their children and to exert influence in the adjustment of their behavior. Arrangements are made with hard-working parents in their time schedule to talk to their children and plan for their future since children are motivated in the home.

Other community persons may also be helpful in stimulating a pupil to achieve. Clergyman, older brothers and sisters, his peers, in group sessions or individually, his friends with whom he engages in wholesome rivalry, his coach and teammates, a successful person from the same social class or race to whom the student can relate, all represent sources of assistance to the counselor.

The student who does achieve, large or small, should receive public or private recognition and encouragement. Certainly outstanding achievement should be recognized, but what about the student for whom a grade of "C" is an outstanding accomplishment? Flexibility must be part of curriculum and program to permit switching of talks, programs, classes, and teachers as circumstances justify or dictate. Inflexibility denies counselors job placement opportunities for students to earn money while going to school. Earning money serves, for some students, as a strong motivation. However, one counselor aptly said it very simply: "Appeal to his self-pride."

Counselors consistently and with persistence avow their responsibility for motivation of disadvantaged youth. The wide variety of methods, materials, and techniques employed attest to this acceptance.

CHAPTER VIII

Identifying the Able Disadvantaged Youth

Counselors today are faced with a challenge to their objectives, preparation, and methods which exceeds that of any previous period in guidance history. Never before has so much been known of the learning process, of ways and means of managing the learning situation, and never before has there been such concerted attention to the extension of educational opportunity, to those children and youth outside the circle. This educational ferment throws into sharp relief the task shouldered by the counselor of identifying the able disadvantaged student. This task involves discovering those talents in students that were not cultivated previously and searching out and encouraging those students who are potentially capable of higher achievement than previously observed. Before steps can be taken to develop these talents, to change curriculum, to alter teaching methods, to reorganize schools, and to generally devise ways to implement change, and to better education of potentially capable children and youth, the central task is to identify such students.

Not surprisingly, the ways by which counselors attempt to discover and identify potentially able disadvantaged students take a variety of forms. They range from the most informal to the most systematic and technical: teacher observation of the student in and out of class and results of standardized tests.

The best way of studying learning ability is that of actually wating how a person learns under natural conditions. One of the best ways of appraisal is the astute teacher's day-by-day observations of the student's work. One counselor admitted his reliance on this technique by saying, "I depend on the evaluation of perceptive teachers and classroom and laboratory situations for signs of initiative, creativity, and even meager attempts at originality." Another expressed his confidence in teacher appraisal by declaring that, "Communication with the individual teacher is the key - we have a hard core of teachers here who are devoted to this type of student. They give an excellent evaluation of the student's potential." Some counselors rely upon the perception and keenness of other counselors. For example, one counselor said, "As a high school counselor, I rely a great deal on the junior high school counselor to spot the potentially apt student for me."

The alert, sensitive, and discerning teacher recognizes and observes mental alertness, the ability to "catch on", the quickness to put two and two together. The traditional indices of high intelligence cannot be followed necessarily - the superior vocabulary, interest in ideas, the abstract, high reading rate, good grades, even the questions asked may not be indicative; the disadvantaged student may not ask questions. The observer may have to sit beside the student while he "thinks aloud," perhaps "works out" the problem with him individually to gain insight into how the student learns. Analysis of his errors in his work, oral and written, gives clues. These are some of the ways by which the teacher's impression of a student's mental ability can be ascertained.

Some counselors prefer to be more clinical; they depend upon results of standardized tests. One counselor was of the opinion that: "The most valuable I. Q. is the first one made. I look back to that score since I. Q.'s for disadvantaged students often decrease." Still, there are counselors who utilize test scores but "check" them. For example, one counselor inferred his doubt this way, "If we feel a youngster is brighter than his test scores indicate, he is referred to a psychologist for individual testing." Even though the counselor uses the standardized test, it is not without knowing that such tests when used with this student does not yield sufficient data on which to generalize. Nevertheless, psychological testing and tests do have the value of revealing strengths, weaknesses, and levels of function during testing.

Classroom teachers obviously play a major role in identifying the capable disadvantaged student to counselors. Some counselors seek their evaluations; others accept them indifferently; a few reject them entirely. There are counselors who "ask a teacher, say a homeroom-class teacher, who has known him a long time to give me an evaluation. They know . . . bright ones." Another worker related that she "always confers with their former teachers." One counselor was indifferent, "Oh, I take them but . . ." Still, a few agree with a counselor in Tampa who rigorously insisted that, "I don't know if I actually accept them - a very tenuous assumption." A Pittsburgh school counselor lamented the fact that "school marks and teacher recommendations are unreliable." These young people are not school people. One thinks of the presently popular comedian, Woody Allen. This young rising star of comedy hated reading, hated school, and dieted on almost a constant menu of comic books and frequent and bad movies. But his interest during the school years ranged from baseball, fishing, and boxing,to magic, the saxophone, and writing comedy material.

The interest of apt students is broader than that of the average student, be he disadvantaged or not. He usually shows not only reasoning ability, but an interest in life and things about him. He is receptive and responds to stimuli from the world around him.

Every possible area of activity is scrutinized by one counselor or another in the search of the able student. The focus leads from outstanding performance in one particular area or activity swinging through a specific interest shown to recognizing just plain aptness. One elementary school counselor felt that, "A child's drawings sometimes are revealing, and give a clue as to a child's interests." Interests in clubs, organizations, athletics and similar activities often uncovers a youngster with potential. With the disadvantaged student, interest does not necessarily lead to participation. Many of these young people feel that a cat can gaze at a king; they look from afar. The after school job, recreational activity,even the position he occupies in the block gang can be revealing of ability not obvious. As one counselor in Cleveland reported, "I look for aptness in more than one way. I recognize potential in a particular area even if not across the board. For example, a student who is outstanding in art." Another said, "A high mark in one subject area is a lead."

Other counselors attempt to obtain a more complete and accurate picture of the social, economic, physical, mental, and avocational factors by combining the various methods. A counselor in Pittsburgh reported that, "We use the student's test profile sheet with differential test results. We consider his cumulative folder, his school record, his interest, interviews with other teachers, samples of his work in class; we consider his possibilities . . . even his after school work and recreation . . . We discuss this with the youngster . . . his parents. Most of the time it has its effect." One counselor ventilated her feelings about identifying the able disadvantaged student summarizing that "the easiest to identify are the hardest to do something about. Those not too obvious are often the easiest to help."

The concern for identifying the potentially capable disadvantaged student is manifested by the methods and processes engaged in the search. They use a variety of techniques, each one revealing a different dimension of his personality, of his general education, vocational and avocational interests, and experience in - and out-of-school. There is no quick, guaranteed method. The more accurate and complete the picture of the factors, the more clearly the prognosis. The school worker must look beyond the individual student: his courses of future action are many times determined by circumstances and attitudes in his family, local community, society, and even the school itself. Personal interviews with the student, teachers' recommendations, school grade, classroom test results, standardized test results, the school psychologist's and teacher's evaluation, cumulative folder contents, personality test scores. co-curriculum and out-of-school activities, "bull sessions" and "buzz sessions," or just plain watching all combine to yield information and insights helpful and necessary to identify the able disadvantaged youth.

It is not uncommon among school guidance workers of disadvantaged students to consider the identification process as the first of three steps. A second step involves helping the disadvantaged youth to perceive and accept themselves positively as individual human beings, capable of the various human response spectrum which ultimately can be channeled into the kind of productivity so necessary for the national and societal welfare. It is additionally encumbent upon the worker to assist the student to develop those attitudes, skills, and commitment without which the human being cannot develop into a productive citizen, even though he is potentially capable of doing so.

Self-evaluation is an important element in the entire process of identification and development of the able disadvantaged student. He must know himself. Some identify themselves in group counseling sessions. Others do so in individual, face-to-face encounters with the counselors.

Some are more easily identifiable because they are vocal; still, others are inarticulate and less verbal. A few are unable to vocalize their feelings and perceptions about themselves and their lack of achievement, lack of progress, or future hopes. But many of these students have a sensory discrimination that is keenly sensitive to those things and feelings that are not verbalized. Just as fear can be detected, so can the disadvantaged youth sense a sincere effort to help him develop a sense of direction and an inner strength. Many young people do not realize that they can achieve. They feel that their problem is here and now. The counselors can bring the alien "I can achieve" concept from the outer spaces of the student's unawareness to the atmosphere of his conscious reality. One counselor accepted her doubts and efforts this way: "I don't know if we actually deter them . . . however, in order to deter students from a sense of futility, a sound basic guidance program of individually presenting to them information about their capabilities, test scores and personal estimates of their potential made by teachers, and of encouraging them to improve themselves, is essential." Without such effort, without this necessary second step, the disadvantaged student remains unchanged. He faces the prospect of a life in which he is expendable - unnecessary to society and its goings-on and living with the day-by-day knowledge that he has been is, and shall be a "nobody" and "doing nothing" in "no place." "Whatever strong point you find in an individual," strongly asserted a counselor, "build on it. Be aware of a student's successes, capitalize on them. We use the slogan 'We try harder' throughout the school." When we try harder we can find him, help him to develop a positive self-concept, and finally take the plunge - engage in the intervention itself.

CHAPTER IX

Extending Guidance Services through Community Resources

The relationship between the counselor, the student, and his parents develops and thrives within a context of which they all are a part - the community. If a child lives in a community where values that the school strives to develop are not reinforced, where there are no rewards for successful attainment of the goals that the school struggles to establish, and where there is an indifference or total disregard of the relationship between the child and the school worker, then the job that the school is trying to do is impossible and difficult at best. The counselor cannot go it alone and he knows it. He cannot provide all of the services his student needs, some parents want, and both student and parents should have. Indeed the effectiveness of the counselor of the disadvantaged student as an instrument for educational achievement and vocational adjustment is probably always dependent on the degree to which he is successful in involving other non-school contributors of effort, time, and experience in student problems. Although the counselor is the primary source of guidance assistance for his students, there are occasions when the nature of the problem, the circumstances of the case, or even the qualifications of the counselor call for the active services of community individuals or agencies. Personnel specifically trained in understanding the social, psychological, and intellectual development and background of disadvantaged youth are being enlisted in ever increasing numbers. Counseling of these children and youth requires the continuing best efforts of the counselor and everyone in the community. It is patent that the office-bound counselor cannot be fully effective.

When needed, the counselor calls for specific and specialized assistance and works closely with the social worker and home-school visitor, as well as with the probation office, state employment counselor, parish priest, or coach of the local Little League baseball team. For example, in one community, churches formed parental workshops where representatives of the medical, legal, and social service professions met and held discussions with parents and tried to develop understanding of the parents' responsibilities to their children and ways in which they could help their sons and daughters.

The functions of the counselor, classroom teacher, and community resource people are all necessary because of the diverse needs of the disadvantaged student. More and more, the counselor finds himself involved in areas of work that once were restricted exclusively to other professional workers. This widening work area and interest does not replace another's function and participation but rather strongly demands supplementary or complimentary services by others. These combined efforts are coordinated and welded into a team activity to help the student resolve his problem and make personal adjustments.

Team effort and coordinated activities of counselor and community resources take shape in many ways. A counselor in Miami recalled that with the help of several mechanics he had organized a "build-a-hot-rod- club for boys and girls in trouble or about to be in trouble." He added that " . . . they are not in trouble with the courts now." Another counselor formed an Aviation Club. The help of pilots, mechanics, and the owner of a hanger and field was enlisted, and fifteen boys and girls built a ship, took lessons, and flew "field trips." But not all joint activities have such a recreational characteristic. Some have more of an educational nature.

A counselor in Cleveland worked in the Goodrich-Bell Neighborhood Center with a group of eight disadvantaged elementary school youngsters. These potential dropouts were met and counseled by the school counselor and the Center recreation leader. The fact that the counselor took part in the games of the Center and was identified, initially at least, with the Center was no small disadvantage.

Two high schools in St. Louis organized two combat teams of social workers, administrative assistants, and counselors to reduce school absence and tardiness. The teams visited homes and worked with the student and the parents in the home or on the street. One team reportedly reduced the incidence of tardiness from an approximated four hundred tardinesses per day to fewer than thirty. Both teams reported an improvement in attendance of four per cent.

Tutoring the disadvantaged student has been quite effective in many instances. In some programs, college and university students have been prominent among the tutor volunteers. In other programs, able high school students tutored less able students. Summer tutorial programs have been initiated. The tutoring took place in settlement houses, community centers, undercroft of churches, parish houses, Y. M. C. A. 's, or Y. W. C. A. 's. Students attended these sessions on Saturday mornings, week-day evenings, or after school. One high school in Pittsburgh scheduled the fifth period for tutoring.

A counselor in Miami reported that before and after school and evening study hours were held in the school's library which is open from 7:10 am to 8:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Another counselor who worked with a group of disadvantaged students in a college preparatory program, conducted a group guidance program on test techniques, including studying test manuals; he discussed colleges in terms of type, cost, curriculum offerings, scholarships, student loans, and social life. He utilized the services of the local school psychologist, college graduates in the community, loan officer of the bank, and prominent socialite of the town. Attendance was high even though the program was voluntary.

In one city school, job development classes are conducted for potential dropouts and former dropouts. Expert remedial teachers help two twenty-member groups with reading and arithmetic. Along with remedial instruction, vocational instruction is offered in such skills as tile setting, window glazing, plumbing, brick laying, woodwork, and auto mechanics. Local craftsmen and businessmen cooperate in the program by helping school vocational teachers to develop curriculum, to draw up course outlines, by making demonstrations, and extending job opportunities.

There are counselors who have been successful in involving individuals of various segments of the community in activities not of an academic nature. The parents of one high school in a depressed area were assisted by the counselor to form a Scholarship Association. The purpose of the Association was to raise funds to help their youngsters get into college, business schools, trade schools or junior colleges. Local businessmen, banking officials, service clubs, and other interested community individuals provided advice, system and organization, solicitation tips, and general leadership strength to the project.

In Beckley, West Virginia, there was formed the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of Beckley, Incorporated, which is affiliated with the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation in Fall River, Massachusetts. The program is concerned with the scholarship needs of the average student for at least a two-year education beyond the high school.

A counselor in Detroit conducted a program for junior high school boys who did not belong to any school organizations or did not have any outside group affiliations such as, Boy Scouts, Hi-Y Club, or church. The program gave these boys a feeling of group belongingness and also provided recreational outlets. Male parents were urged to participate in the activities of gymnastics, swimming, volleyball, basketball, ping-pong, checkers, chess, movies, with their sons. This helped fathers know their sons, to learn how to work and play with them. For those boys with no father, a father substitute was found. This program encouraged the participation of men, not necessarily trained professional men, but men just interested in helping youngsters.

A Youth Corps was established in one city to help the high school disadvantaged student develop a positive self-feeling by performing services in the community.

One counselor organized a leadership program for girls who had "adjustment problems." Girls planned parties, took movie trips, and other group activities. As they gained status through these activities, their social adjustment improved. In a Buffalo school, a counselor used able students as office monitors to help them develop a sense of responsibility.

These programs and others are initiated, conducted, and sustained by sincere, imaginative, and dynamic counselors working with community people. The purposes are sound, the objectives high, and the intent honorable. But not withstanding, a program that strays markedly from the known traditional practices is vulnerable to the sharp edge of public voice. Eventually, a new program is justified by demonstrated results; until then it is judged on issues and impressions. New undertakings should be launched as experiments, accompanied by tentative public pronouncements and,preferably, with no public announcements. It should be kept in mind that any program with students that involves school people and community people and one that does not smack of school-like practices and activities is highly visible. Its visibility should silhouette the only reason for being, to help bring about the kinds of adjustments necessary for bringing about a thirst for the "good life."

The success of the counseling service is influenced in many ways by the relationship that exists between the counselor, the student, and the community of which it is a part. The disadvantaged student is not merely a disadvantaged child or youth; he is not just a student; he is a member of a family, a member of the community, and his problems have their beginnings in all these elements of his background. Any efforts by the counselor to assist the student to solve problems that have their genesis beyond the school must have a working understanding of his total environment. He must have an empathetic understanding of the home pressure and the community pressures, as well as the school pressures bearing upon the student. Certainly, any counselor assistance to help the student to grow to self-direction and maturity must be saturated with a familiarity of the home and community influences that contribute differentially to such growth. Growth does not occur without the seeding of home, neighborhood, ethnic, and educational pressures that help shape the student personality and outlook.

But counselors are hardy people and the public is usually understanding. Two counselors reported receiving adverse,unfair criticism.

One counselor summarized future action for counselors and community agencies as one in which "their information and their resources should be pooled for better cooperation and articulation so that the disadvantaged student and his family will receive the maximum benefits."

CHAPTER X

Counselors Speak Out

A series of conferences, correspondence, and visitations with guidance workers of the disadvantaged student have revealed innumerable methods and techniques in use and countless activities and projects being conducted on the local scene. Imaginative and dynamic experimentation and innovations are in effect. A miracle techniques is not found in the search for effective ways to guide and counsel the disadvantaged student. However, out of the comments and experiences of these counselors who strive to assist youth and, in turn, be assisted, took shape a pattern of meaning. The perceptible motif was one of counselor preparation - preparation lacked, preparation needed, and the preparation implied for professional guidance workers.

Special training for counselors of the disadvantaged student was one proposed change in preparation upon which counselors lack agreement. Some workers, on the one hand, are of the opinion that special training is not needed. It is felt that each school counseling job situation is unique and that the counselor must learn the situation in which he finds himself. His familiarity with and knowledge of his situation should guide any adjustments and adaptations of his training that are needed to meet the demands of the particular position. Such adjustments and adaptations can be effected, based on the basic core of professional courses that the counselor brings with him.

Those who feel that special training is needed, on the other hand, base their recommendation on the fact that their professional counseling preparation was largely theoretical, esoteric, and pedantic. Courses focused on the middle-class student, the ideal situation, and counseling problems and cases found in schools with middle-class populations. It is suggested that realistic and substantive content be afforded the counselor-in-training. Such content would be in terms of what counseling the disadvantaged is, how it may be accomplished, and what it is really like. These are meaningful materials for application in the guidance programs.

A second area in the statement of proposed change deals with the substantive content of professional preparation for counselors. It is felt that counseling programs should be oriented toward the sociological, psychological, and anthropological aspects of the disadvantaged population who subsequently will be the recipients of the guidance services. The counselor-in-training more often than not is different from the youth with whom he will work. Most differ economically and educationally; many differ cultually or socially. In even larger numbers there are those who differ in all ways. Although differences between the counselor and the student exist, the chasm between the counselor's world and the home, school, and world of his student must be bridged. The bridge is planked with understanding and real knowledge of the special population groups and their affective characteristics. The understandings and special knowledge, so necessary in the affectation of methods and techniques, can be gained by studying students' psychological, economical, and sociological background and characteristics. Such study would alter the tendency to over generalize and over simplify the problems of minorities and other disadvantaged groups by redirecting attention to similarities between groups. Group cultural backgrounds are just as varied as are the backgrounds of individuals of the group. An intimate working knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic and psychological background of the individual would do much to ease the psychological and real discomfort many counselors experience when working with disadvantaged students.

Affective characteristics are important aspects of work with deprived youth. One Counselor reflected her feelings by offering that, "Sincerity of the counselor is more important than formal instruction. One cannot train for empathy, and disadvantaged people detect insincerity immediately." One may not agree completely with this comment, but agree one must, that sincerity, active interest, and concern are effective and necessary in dealing with the disadvantaged. Counselors themselves suggest that one should possess and manifest in day-by-day counseling the personal and professional characteristics of sincerity, sympathy, placid temperament, acceptance, compassion, realistic optimism, faith, respect, and belief in the worth and dignity of all individuals, knowledge of the socio-economic-psychological milieu, and an expertness in counseling methods and techniques.

Practicum courses were not considered with impunity. Counselors comment on their practicum courses as illustrated by the following quotations:

> "The students I worked with in my training were not the kinds of students I work with here."

> "They were not discipline problems, they were concerned with the school program, and they did not need the kind of help the students here need. These youngsters have problems all of their own. We are not as

> concerned here about what college they are going to attend, as we are in getting them to graduate from high school."

> "My practicum was with well-adjusted, gifted children - now . . ."

Some preparatory programs exclude practicum on the elementary and secondary levels. One counselor insisted that "university practicum would have been more valuable had it included work with elementary and secondary school students instead of university students." Training without the full experience of direct and first-hand involvement with the student and his family and active participation in neighborhood and community affairs in the setting of the student makes the knowledge of principles, skills, attitudes, and their application truly an esoteric, academic, and abstract exercise. Understandings and techniques with the welding element of practical experience transforms them from chimerical mental calisthenics to functional working tools.

To prepare counselors adequately, counselors suggest the need for the development and installation of laboratory courses, internships, and practicum that provide experimental learnings. Counselors do feel strongly about this facet of preparation. Experiences have been less than satisfactory. The following comments underscore this criticism:

> "Counselors should have internships just as doctors and lawyers."
>
> "Our new teachers and counselors had read in books about the disadvantaged, but it was not meaningful to them until they had worked here four or five months and had gained experience for themselves."
>
> "Counselors do not get adequate supervision . . . They sink or swim by trial and error."

These programs should involve working with the disadvantaged student in his natural setting and should have high caliber supervision that assists in counselor self-analysis. This phase of the preparatory program lends strong reality to counselor training. Working with the student in his school and in his neighborhood permits the counselor first-hand experience with the personality, problems, and needs of the student. Many programs do offer programmed experimental learnings but working with the disadvantaged student during this period is not yet always possible.

The element of practical experience shapes understandings and techniques into counseling behaviors of specific, practical value - a partnership between theory and practice. Experimental learnings provide opportunity for the counselor not only to field test those methods and techniques learned in the classroom but to modify them or to develop his own in an actual counseling situation. Development and modification of the counselor's own materials, methods, and techniques can occur only in situations in which experimentation and innovation are encouraged, are possible, and are supported.

This call for increased emphasis on techniques, methods, and materials underscores the need for that content found to improve counseling with disadvantaged youth. Counselors in increasing number and in more and more schools, are discussing and identifying techniques and methods that have high successful and practical application. This reservoir must be tapped.

This intervention of reality into the professional sequence of counselor preparation additionally makes possible counselor identification, recognition, and accounting of his own attitudes, feelings, behavior, and motivation.

The underscored recognized need for guidance and counseling as a basic service for all students in elementary and secondary schools places a heavy responsibility upon the counselor. The nature of the counseling process in our pluralistic society challanges patterns of the past. Dichotomy between theory and practice or the affective and the cognitive is a luxury that cannot be afforded. More and more counselors are being redirected by the high visibility being given to the disadvantaged student. Increasingly guidance workers are becoming cognizant of the practical value and applicability of procedures, methods, and techniques. Preparation is being examined. Traditional principles and concepts are being examined within the total societal context of the individual. A good start has been made.

At this time in history, the emphasis upon and support of efforts to train, re-educate, and revitalize guidance and counseling as a function central to the development and adjustment of the disadvantaged student is stronger than ever before.

Federal participation and support have been given the growing demand for professional counselor training. Title V of the National Defense Education Act enacted by Congress in 1958 seeks to relieve the short supply of qualified school counselors. Its impact has been felt sharply. Although supply has not met demand, the full-time equivalent of local school guidance and counseling workers has increased from 12,000 in the year of enactment to 27,000 in 1963, and to 29,000 in 1964. The ratio of full-time counselors has improved from 1 to 960 in 1958 to less than 1 to 500 at the present time. An important function of Title V of the NDEA is the support of counseling and guidance training institutes conducted during the academic school year and summer. These institutes are designed to improve the quality of counseling and guidance in elementary, secondary, and technical schools across the nation. The Federal Government authorized similar institutes for the training of teachers of the disadvantaged, when the 88th Congress added Title XI to the National Defense Education Act as a part of its 1964 amendments. Forty-seven colleges and universities, under contract with the U.S. Office of Education, offered NDEA Institutes for Teachers of Disadvantaged Youth during the summer of 1965.

Evidence is at hand to warrant the rejection of the production of more of the same counselors we have had in the past and of being complacent with reinforcing that guidance and counseling which already exists. A new approach is gaining momentum - deliberate, planned effort to change and modify counselor education.

Preparation of counselors for working with the disadvantaged student is a continuing process. Much can be supplied in advance of counseling in the school, but consolidation and deepening of many necessary insights, methods, techniques, and understanding have traditionally occurred subsequent to training. The trauma of the first day that one is confronted by the student is great enough for most; it should not be compounded by a complete unawareness of what the student is like and what the counseling experience is really like. Preparation and education of counselors is probably never a finished process. The complexity and variety of problems associated with the disadvantaged negate a terminal point. The successful counselor goes on and on learning, experimenting, and finding out what others are doing. His counseling and guidance work with his students is enhanced and is made more effective by his own student counseling experiences.

It has been suggested that the "training of teachers for the disadvantaged should do four things for each trainee:

1. Develop in him a genuine interest in these children and a respect for them rather than simply have him acquire some knowledge about them.
2. Expose him carefully and thoroughly to the disadvantaged so that he can free himself of any negative preconceptions he may have had about these people.

3. Show him how to use teaching methods adapted to the learning style of the disadvantaged.
4. Develop in him an effective teaching style, as distinguished from method."[9]

Such purpose and change in like fashion should effect counselor acceptance of the responsibility for helping all students realize their full potential and reflect a deep belief that all students are ethnically equal though personally and culturally different. Changing of preparation should enable counselors to become even more knowledgeable of and practical in the behavioral and social sciences as they relate to guidance and to know the changing vocational world and its occupational needs and expectations. A greater effort should result in encouraging and utilizing parents and community and school resources for cooperative assistance in student development and adjustment. Nowhere are there greater challenges than those that face counselors as they take stock of the student population, as they identify the disadvantaged, and as they assist the student to prepare himself for a productive and satisfying life.

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[9] Frank Riessman, "The Lessons of Poverty," American Education. Washington, D. C.: Office of Education. U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Volume 1, Number 2, February 1965, p. 21.

With their understandings and skills, counselors have a unique opportunity not only to contribute to the disadvantaged they guide, but also to enhance the opportunity for both the counselor and his disadvantaged student to learn and grow.

CHAPTER XI

The Impact of the Disadvantaged Upon the Counselor

The impact of disadvantaged youth upon counselors has been sharp and varied in its intensity. Daily work with this group has provided some counselors with a new sense of direction. Others have become enmeshed and frustrated amidst the complexities of the student, his needs, problems, realities of his life, and his family. To find out how the counselor was affected by his guidance responsibilities with the disadvantaged student, two standard inquiries were posed:

- In what way, if any, has your morale and effectiveness been affected by your work with disadvantaged students?
- Would you choose to continue working with disadvantaged students if you had a choice?

To many counselors, working with the disadvantaged students exceeds many expectations. The trepidations preceeding counseling are transformed into enjoyment, pride, and a sense of accomplishment subsequent to the actual task. Counselors express this experience in these ways:

> "Very rewarding. I get a lot of self-satisfaction from my work."

> "Most gratifying for me. Many potential dropouts said they wouldn't have stayed in school without the Ford Foundation Program--many have since gone to college. I feel in some way I have helped them."

> "I enjoy working with my students. We can show how effective we are by working with problem kids. I find my work very challenging, and I can see results."

> "Responsive work, stimulating, challenging. I like the variety."

Others feel disappointed, frustrated, and express their disenchantment in the following ways:

> "I wouldn't want to work with any one type of student all of the time. One needs the challenges of the middle-class as well as the disadvantaged."

> "My morale and effectiveness are affected by the large number

> of students I have to work with. The counselor-student ratio and demands are too great. Counselors should be assigned according to the needs of the students, rather than according to the number of students. We never have time to review or file our work."
>
> "Sometimes my morale is low because I cannot do enough to see some change and be as effective as I'd like to be."
>
> "I see a great need and a challenge in my work although it is sometimes depressing. I have disciplined myself not to take the problems home with me."

Still, there are others who are depressed, discouraged, and defeated by the realities of the school and the circumstances governing their young charges.

> "I am affected by the dichotomy of my role. I am expected to serve in an administrative capacity as well as a guidance capacity. Not enough time to function in both capacities. Sometimes I feel disappointed. I need clerical help and a lower counselor-student ratio."
>
> "I am experienceing a little defeat now. If we could remove

some of the students from their homes, we could accomplish more with them."

Then there are those who feel a personal gain by association with a program and its clientele as indicated in:

> "When I first came, I was rather disillusioned. I was determined when I completed my internship, I would transfer to what I then considered a more socially desirable area. By the time I became qualified, I had changed my mind. I had an opportunity to accept a position in another school, but waited for an opening in this school to become a counselor. There was quite a bit of anxiety among my family when I took this job. My social peers teased me about working in this area. They felt if one was not successful in a middle-class school, he was sent to the "boondocks."However, their attitudes have changed as a result of the publicity given this school due to its participation in the Ford Foundation's program, and because I qualified to attend a course at Harvard by working here."

Counseling the disadvantaged student must be a different experience for each counselor. The student and his needs, family, and all that he brings to the counselor in the school setting must be perceived and interpreted by the beholder. The comments of these counselors do serve to throw into sharp relief the variety of attitudes, feelings, and motivations which counselors bring to the counseling situation. These, in turn, help determine what kind of affective experience that counseling the disadvantaged shall be.

Responses of counselors to the question, "Would you choose to continue working with disadvantaged students if you had a choice?" range from the affirmative to the negative. The following responses indicate a willingness and desire to continue working with these students. Some are influenced by the sheer joy and pleasure derived from working with and assisting young people.

> "I would not trade it voluntarily to return to the classroom. I like working in a situation where the days are filled with a variety of avenues for assisting youth to improve themselves for the present and for their future as adults."

> "I'll stay here. I have had opportunities to leave. When you help the disadvantaged, they are much more appreciative. They are willing to go along with you and give of

themselves. They lack a good home situation and high marks, but kids are kids. Many are bettering themselves in all appects of their lives."

"Yes, I choose to work in a disadvantaged neighborhood. I enjoy my work. I feel there is more satisfaction in working with a disadvantaged group. I would continue working here because I like it and I feel I can contribute more because they need more."

"I would continue. I feel that I am reaching quite a few in helping them plan for the future. I feel these kids need more help than more privileged students. They have an identification with me and I relate well to the parents because they trust me."

"I have worked here 19 or 20 years. I have no plans to leave. We have so much more to offer these children--I do not know if I would have as much to offer children on the other end of the scale."

"I definitely plan to remain here . . . difficult to give reasons

> . . . the challenge . . . relationships with the student . . . a need for me in a place like this . . . more to work with, various disadvantages. I see fruits of my work more here than in a higher socio-economic level school."

One counselor was influenced by staff and students. She asserted that, "I would stay on this job. I like the people with whom I work --very cooperative staff. The attitude of the administration in important. I prefer to work with a cooperative administration, regardless of the area. I love the children and have formed attachments to the children and their parents."

Not all counselors are so willing to prolong their stay in their present situations. Some are definite in their reluctance to continue counseling with the disadvantaged. They put it this way:

> "I would leave . . . "

> "My morale and effectiveness have been affected. I have so many youngsters to work with, with a variety of problems. The work load prohibits me from doing some of the things I know how to do."

> "Sometimes it gets you down. The pressures and

frustrations are great. Up to here (pointing across the shoulder in the region of the neck) by the end of the day, but I bounce back by the next morning, and am ready to begin again. I wonder sometimes about the day I don't bounce back . . . I want to leave."

"I am not sure I would want to work totally with children from these subgroups. I like a heterogeneous group such as we have."

"I would probably accept another position where I would not be a policeman or a nursemaid and could do a professional job of counseling."

"I would like to transfer. I live on the other side of town. I get up at 5:15 every morning. I have to leave home early to avoid the traffic. I get here at 6:45 although I am not due here until 7:45."

Still, there are those workers who see counseling the disadvantaged not as an experience to be emotionally digested and analyzed, but rather as a job to be desired and performed by a qualified, trained professional. It was stated this way:

> "Youngsters are youngsters. It helps to have understanding, empathy, and sympathy. A good counselor works weel in any situation."

> "All children need help. I haven't decided if I function differently here than in another situation. I have no reason to change."

> "Depends on the attitude of the individual -- would he rather be on the frontlines or sitting back in headquarters. This is where the real fight is."

It would seem that for many counselors the task of counseling the disadvantaged student is a demanding yet satisfying experience. The proportion of counselors expressing a willingness and desire to continue in their present schools was overwhelming. Counselors with obvious high morale and feelings of real effectiveness talk of their jobs in terms of challenge, stimulation, variety, self-satisfaction, hope, observation of accomplishment, and appreciation from their counselees and their parents. Those less enthusiastic and reluctant to stay on appeared to be influenced by heavy counseling working loads, lack of planning, review, and evaluation time, lack of clerical assistance, and the administration's role expectation of a disciplinarian-administrator-clerk-counselor. Morale and effectiveness, in the main, were matters of little consequence. There seemed to be little "living with the job." In fact, one counselor confided that, "I discipline myself not to take the problems home with me."

Most counselors have their minds made up about counseling the disadvantaged student and working with him day-after-day. They either enjoy it or detest it. They either want to transfer or they want to stay. However, there is general agreement that guidance programs cannot be tolerated which place their attention on the general school population with little, if any, concern and focus being afforded the disadvantaged minority who fall within the purview of guidance responsibilities. Counseling of the disadvantaged youth is a guidance service no longer to be denied. It is essential to the development and fulfillment of human dignity, worth, and capability.

There is general agreement that the disadvantaged may be found almost anywhere in this country - in urban centers, towns, and rural farm areas, in the North, South, East, or West. The size, shape, color, talents, and capabilities of the disadvantaged student vary greatly. City, county, state, and regional lines are disregarded. The number may be debatable but the trend seems indisputable. The shift in concern and direction being given to counseling the disadvantaged is relatively new; the student is not. He has been on public assistance, under-paid, inadequately and poorly trained, underfed, and under - or unemployed for many years. It has been only during the past decade that equal opportunity for all youth has taken on massive dimensions. The disadvantaged student is better identified and generally recognized by more people than ever before. Although he is born, lives, and passes away as unnoticed as the obscurity in which he has lived, the truth is that the disadvantaged student is only beginning to be known. Many of the features are recognizable, but they now are explicable.

Singling out myths and fables from fact, we understand that the culturally deprived youth is similar in many respects to the middle-class child. We become aware that in great numbers, the disadvantaged student is attracted by the same lure that underlies much of our collective and individual modern societal and cultural activities - even the settling of our great country - the better life. Any serious consideration of all that is known about these young people leads to the realization that the missing ingredient in education and training of the disadvantaged is the ability of school workers, in particular, to use those assets of loyalty, imagination, and resourcefulness for their own conformity in a conforming school paradigm. How to turn promise and intent into sustained positive and creative action is yet to be discovered. Until a unique formula is derived, counselors face hard, exhausting, and frustrating work.

One fact is obvious. The disadvantaged student is not disappearing from the American school scene. It is estimated that by the close of the present decade, the approximately one-third of the urban population now identified as disadvantaged will have increased to nearly one-half of all city school students.

The longer we look, the more carefully we look, and the more frequently we look, the more is recognized the striking similarities rather than the differences between the disadvantaged and his middle-class counterpart. The rising number of disadvantaged students, their presence that extends beyond traditional school district lines, reluctant communities, and the massive efforts to work with them leads to one conclusion: the disadvantaged student is one with whom the counselor, the teacher, and the community must be concerned. One counselor aptly expressed it by saying, "I wouldn't want to go back to a high school where 60 per cent of the graduates went to Yale, Princeton, and Harvard. This is where the vital difference is--where we shall win or lose in the next ten years." As programs increase, as preparation becomes more exact, as greater numbers of counselors are trained and are available, and as school workers increasingly give attention to these youth, we see these not so much as independent activities but rather as an approach to making guidance truly democratic.

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